

Airdrie, Alberta  
January 5, 2015

The Honourable Rob Nicholson  
Minister of National Defence  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON  
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Nicholson:

**Re: Canadian Forces Involved in Firearms Seizures in High River**

Reference is being made to my previous letter dated May 19, 2014 regarding Canadian Forces activities and performance in High River during the flood of 2013 and your response dated October 1, 2014 (copies attached for easy reference). It was encouraging to hear you say that the RCMP Public Complaints Commission would also be addressing the questions and concerns raised in my original letter even though they have no legislative mandate to do so and this added responsibility wasn't mentioned in their original terms of reference for their High River review. Can we all assume their terms of reference were amended to encompass these added responsibilities and questions?

I am writing to you today because it appears that your office wasn't fully informed about the extent to which soldiers were not following published orders from both the Defence Minister and the Chief of Defence Staff; those orders directing soldiers NOT to get involved in law enforcement activities during their deployment in High River. Documentation recently obtained under *Access to Information Act* requests made some time ago contains evidence that Canadian Forces personnel were indeed involved in the seizure of firearms during their deployment in High River between June 20, 2013 and June 27, 2013. What follows is my analysis of your department's response to the following *Access to Information Act* request. I respectfully request that you have your most senior officials render to you their careful and thorough examination of the facts.

My request and the documents provided are available online at this link:

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE *ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT* RESPONSE - OCTOBER 17, 2014  
COMMUNICATION LOGS, RCMP REQUESTS, HANDWRITTEN NOTES & DISCIPLINARY ACTION - 209 pages  
[https://nfa.ca/sites/default/files/DND\\_ATIP\\_Response\\_Comm\\_Logs\\_Requests\\_and\\_Notes\\_Oct\\_17\\_2014.pdf](https://nfa.ca/sites/default/files/DND_ATIP_Response_Comm_Logs_Requests_and_Notes_Oct_17_2014.pdf)

My analysis of the documents provided is as follows. References to PDF page number refer to the 209 pages or documents provided and available at the above URL link.

**A. WHAT SOLDIERS WERE ORDERED TO DO IN HIGH RIVER**

A. On PDF page 0022 an e-mail dated June 21, 2013 titled: *JTFW FRAG 0- SUPPORT OF FLOOD MITIGATION IN SOUTHERN AB - Item 5 - COMMAND AND SIGNALS* states:

*"a. Comd. All CF assets will remain under CF comd at all times."* [Emphasis added]

B. On PDF page 0031 an e-mail dated June 28, 2013 from L/Col T.P. Gosselin states:

*"I have spoke with BGen Juneau who has spoke with Comd ICMBG on this issue. Command LFWA states that at no time did our soldiers touch any weapons."* [Emphasis added]

C. On PDF page 0034 an e-mail dated June 27, 2013 with the subject heading:  
**"URGENT MNDO RFI: High River Gun Seizures"**

First quote: **"CF was not/not auth to conduct ALEA tasks."** [Emphasis added]

Note: ALEA = Assistance to Law Enforcement Authorities

Second quote: **"Before we reach down with this RFI - the subject of which would have been reported were CF pers had participated, I would ask that the context provided to MNDO be given to us for this RFI. Isay this, because such an activity was well outside of the arcs provided to the CF from the CDS. Please advise to help us answer the RFI."** [Emphasis added]

Note: RFI = Request For Information; MNDO = Minister of National Defence Office; CDS = Chief of Defence Staff

D. On PDF page 0037 and 0038 an e-mail dated June 28, 2013 from L/Col. T.P Gosselin in response to a media query recorded this reply:

**"This is clear I will have the LFWA MRL emphasize the fact the we helped police forces is finding people in distress not conducted "law enforcement"."** [Emphasis added]

Note: LFWA = Land Force Western Area; MRL = Media Response Line

E. On PDF page 0038 an e-mail dated June 28, 2013 from Col. D.J. Anderson states:

**"As indicated last night in response to the RFI from the PMO:**

**\* soldiers of IVP did enter homes in High River to assist the RCMP in finding persons in distress, deceased persons, and pets.**

**\* soldiers did NOT/NOT seize weapons. The RCMP did seize weapons that were not secured."**

F. On PDF page 0039 an e-mail dated June 28, 2013 from Maj. L.B. Angell in response to a media query from the Ottawa Sun states:

**"#1 In High River, the Canadian Armed Forces personnel supported the RCMP neighborhood survey by providing transport in areas covered in water using Light Armoured Vehicles and Rigid Hulled Inflatable Boats"** [Emphasis added]

G. On PDF page 0070 and 0071 an e-mail dated June 28, 2013 from Maj. L.B. Angell states: "As per our telcon, I am amending MRL bullet #1 below.

**"New bullet reads: #1 (new) CAF supported police strictly in a search and rescue capacity, which included entering into homes.**

**#2 At no time did CAF members conduct any law enforcing activity: specifically CAF members did NOT: Seize weapons, Set up barricades, Force entry into homes."** [Emphasis added]

H. On PDF page 0071 and 0072 an e-mail dated June 28, 2013 from Maj. L.B. Angell in response to a media enquiry from the Ottawa Sun states:

***"#2 At no time did our soldiers touch any weapons"*** [Emphasis added]

## **B. EVIDENCE OF WHAT SOLDIERS IN HIGH RIVER ACTUALLY DID**

The following comments are made after reviewing the 31 pages of handwritten notes (PDF pages 144 to 175) created by Canadian Armed Forces personnel deployed in High River and which were disclosed to us under the referenced *Access to Information Act* request. The provided copies of these notes are obviously incomplete and the copies provided were very faint making most of them unreadable. There were also many sections blanked out by your staff. We hope the complete, original versions of these notes were made available to the investigators with the RCMP Public Complaints Commission and were made available to you, or now will be.

COMMENT #1 - It appears from these notes recorded below that soldiers were, in some instances, taking orders from the RCMP and not under the Canadian Forces command as stated in Item A above.

- On PDF page 0146 the handwritten notes taken by soldiers in High River states: ***"confirm with law enforcement to enter owners home"*** [Emphasis added]
- On PDF page 0151 the handwritten notes taken by soldiers in High River states: ***"tasked by RCMP to conduct sweep from 8th Ave SE to 2ns St SE"*** [Emphasis added]

COMMENT #2 - It appears that soldiers were doing more than just providing transportation to the RCMP, as claimed in Item F above. Depending on what the blanked out sections say, it even appears that the soldiers were conducting independent searches of High River homes without RCMP supervision.

- On PDF page 0157 the handwritten notes taken by soldiers in High River states: ***"for the remainder of the night. Are we suppose to be doing roaming patrols & searches - we'll need more direction on this."***
- On PDF page 0158 the handwritten notes taken by soldiers in High River states: ***"Security check performed by Cpl Edwards" - "Security check completed" - "Security check completed"***
- On PDF page 0159 the handwritten notes taken by soldiers in High River states: ***"Cpl Roy and Cpl Gallardo on shift - search team sect ----- do you have RV - we have all the teams we need ----- south North ----- awaiting RCMP search team to tell us our sector..."*** [Emphasis added]

Note: ----- indicates blanked out sections.

It is also important to note that the RCMP were using code words like "clear" and "door check" and "door knocks" and "security check" to describe their wholesale campaign of forced entries into hundreds and hundreds of abandoned homes and seizure of hundreds of firearms, tons of ammunition, firearms magazines, bayonets, knives, bows, etc.

COMMENT #3 - It appears from these notes below that the soldiers did get involved in law enforcement activities and, did in fact, "touch" and "seize" weapons contrary to Items B, C, D, E, H and G above.

- On PDF page 0153 the handwritten notes (many blanked out sections) taken by soldiers in High River states: *"...have someone link up with her & RCMP that ensure weapons are secured, bring back to firehall ----- cooarded RCMP CPG - in loc for 30 mins at that point the weapons in ----- can you call ----- on Blackberry ---- if needed he can call and talk with ----- no that is fine // rgr out can you send in a sitrep once you begin your search? //rgr"*

Note: ----- indicates blanked out sections.

- On PDF page 0154 the handwritten notes taken by soldiers in High River states: *"linked up with MP and are switching weapons now - RCMP are back looking for them"* [Emphasis added]

Note: Since Canadian Forces personnel were not issued weapons for their rescue mission in High River, what weapons could they have been "switching" with the RCMP, as noted above? Where did the "weapons" in the possession of those soldiers come from? It is doubtful that RCMP members armed CF personnel during their six days in High River. I refer you to the original request for assistance from the Alberta Minister of Municipal Affairs who specifically stated: *"I do not foresee a requirement to use the CF members as peace officers, and I do not see a requirement to arm them for these humanitarian and disaster response duties."*

As with the case in the 143 pages of handwritten notes taken by RCMP search teams in High River and provided to us under previous *Access to Information Act* requests, we are unable to find any mention of a single person rescued, or needing to be rescued, in the 31 pages of handwritten notes taken by Canadian Armed Forces personnel in High River. We're not saying there were no rescues just that we can't see them in the handwritten notes provided. We all know and appreciate the 31 people that were rescued from High River rooftops by CF helicopters during the night of June 20, 21, 2013. The subject forced entries, warrantless searches and seizures continued for six days with the assistance of CF personnel and then a further seventeen days by the RCMP.

With the greatest respect for your record in office, this matter requires your immediate, full and personal attention.

Yours sincerely,

[Original signed by]

Dennis R. Young  
1330 Ravenswood Drive SE  
AIRDRIE AB T4A 0P8  
Home Phone: 587-360-1111  
New E-Mail: [dennisryoung@telus.net](mailto:dennisryoung@telus.net)

cc Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada  
Honourable Steven Blaney, Minister of Public Safety  
Honourable Peter Mackay, Minister of Justice  
Mr. Ian McPhail, Chairman, Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP (CRCC).  
Mr. Rick H. Hemmingson, J.D.

Minister  
of National Defence



Ministre  
de la Défense nationale

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0K2

Received  
Oct 10, 2014

OCT 01 2014

Mr. Dennis R. Young  
1330 Ravenswood Drive South East  
Airdrie AB T4A 0P8

Dear Mr. Young:

Thank you for your letter of 19 May 2014 about the flooding in Alberta last year, and please accept my apology for the delay in responding.

In June 2013 the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) supported Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) flood relief operations in High River, Alberta. The support was provided pursuant to subsection 273.6(1) (Public Service) of the *National Defence Act*, following a request for assistance from the Minister of Public Safety, which was itself preceded by a request for assistance from the Province of Alberta. The CAF was asked for humanitarian support, including transportation support, in the effort to find trapped or injured people.

On 5 July 2013 the Commission for Public Complaints Against the Royal Canadian Mounted Police announced that it had initiated a public interest investigation into RCMP actions during these flood relief operations. I am confident that the Commission will look into many of the questions you raise in your letter and that have been expressed by other members of the public. I look forward to the results of the investigation.

I trust that this information is helpful, and thank you for your interest in this matter.

Yours truly,

Hon. Rob Nicholson, PC, QC, MP

Canada

Airdrie, Alberta  
May 19, 2014

The Honourable Rob Nicholson  
Minister of National Defence  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON  
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Nicholson:

**Re: Canadian Forces Engaged in Law Enforcement in High River**

Firstly, let me commend Public Safety Minister Vic Toews, National Defence Minister Peter MacKay, DND Deputy Minister Richard B. McFadden, General T.J. Lawson, Chief of Defense Staff for their speedy response to the Alberta Government's request for assistance in Alberta and High River in particular. The actions of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) deployed are also to be commended for their overall professionalism and courage that resulted in saving 31 people from the rooftops of homes in High River homes on June 20 and 21, 2013.

I am writing you today with concerns about what happened in High River after those people were rescued.

I recently received a response to my *Access to Information Act* request (DND file: A-2013-01161). Among those documents was a copy of your e-mail response dated August 30, 2013 to a person asking about the involvement of the Canadian Armed Forces in the subsequent forcible entry into thousands of homes in High River, Alberta and the warrantless seizures of firearms, ammunition, magazines, other weapons and accessories from those homes.

In your email, you stated: "The mandate of the CAF was clear, providing mobility and protecting the safety and security of residents - which included going door-to-door in High River and locating residents who were in distress or deceased; **our task was not assistance to law enforcement.**" [emphasis added]. Documents released by your department (DND ATIP file A-2013-01158) confirms that on June 21, 2013 this direction was given to your troops by Defence Minister MacKay and General T.J. Lawson, Chief of Defense Staff: "Canadian Armed Forces personnel will not engage in law enforcement activities. Should the support of the Canadian Armed Forces be required to provide assistance to law enforcement authorities, it will be the subject of another request." Documents provided to me so far only includes a copy of the original request from the Alberta Minister Responsible for Emergency Response, Doug Griffiths. Somewhere during the six-day CAF deployment in High River something went seriously off the rails.

Documents obtained directly from the RCMP through *Access to Information Act* requests show that after the first day or so of the emergency in High River, the RCMP officers were, in fact, doing more law enforcement during their unwarranted door-to-door search and seizure operation than "protecting the safety and security of residents." I offer as evidence my analysis of the 212-page response to RCMP ATIP File: A-2013-04640 in my letter to the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP dated March 24, 2014. See the links below. I have also included a hard copy for your easy reference and I respectfully ask you to review it. <https://nfa.ca/news/eighth-letter-rcmp-public-complaints-commissioner-march-24-2014>  
[http://www.cdnsportingsports.org/2014/03/Eighth\\_Letter\\_to\\_RCMP\\_Public\\_Complaints\\_Commissioner-20140324.pdf](http://www.cdnsportingsports.org/2014/03/Eighth_Letter_to_RCMP_Public_Complaints_Commissioner-20140324.pdf)



It seems pretty clear from the above documents that Canadian Armed Forces personnel and vehicles drove the RCMP up to many of the 4,000 homes they searched and nearly 2,000 doors they kicked in. Canadian Armed Forces personnel are clearly visible in the boat in this video released to the media by senior RCMP officers during the flood event in High River:

<http://bcblue.wordpress.com/2013/06/28/redford-ordered-rcmp-to-enter-and-take-high-river-residents-fire-arms/>

Expert analysis of the radio transmission heard in this video establishes that the RCMP were targeting homes with firearms for their warrantless search and seize operation.

<https://nfa.ca/news/video-analysis-reveals-rcmp-targeting-houses-firearms>

It seems that Canadian Armed Forces LAVs and boats were also used to collect the hundreds of firearms, ammunition, magazines, other weapons and accessories which were seized from abandoned High River homes. The Canada Armed Forces' own audio-visual, photographic record and recordings of radio communications of their activities in High River will confirm this.

Based on the evidence obtained so far, it appears the Canadian Armed Forces aided and abetted the unwarranted searches and seizures from High River homes. Just like the driver of the getaway vehicle in a bank robbery is guilty of bank robbery, CAF personnel are also guilty for the mistakes or crimes committed by RCMP officers conducting these aggressive searches and seizures in High River.

It is also clear from the documentation provided so far that all or the door breaking and warrantless searches conducted by the RCMP in High River did not result in a single person being rescued. Not one. Therefore, the RCMP's claim that this door-to-door was a search operation for "survivors" in need of rescue is not credible. Search requests, complaints and appeals where the RCMP have refused to disclose pertinent documents are ongoing. At this point, the RCMP has even refused to release documents showing the number and type of charges laid as a result of these warrantless searches.

Something went seriously amiss in the High River search and rescue operation on or about June 23rd. The following documents were obtained through *Access to Information Act* requests:

- National Defence documents dated June 24, 2013 stated: "**No further danger to civilians (life and limb) and evacuations not requested.**" [emphasis added]
- An RCMP e-mail dated June 24, 2013 from RCMP Superintendent Frank Smart states: "As of 1500hrs today, RCMP led by STO have **completed the physical search of all homes in High River** [emphasis added] (with the exception of a small amount in quadrant 8 which is underwater)." Houses/Buildings 3,337 - Forced Entries 674 - People located 303." Note: These 303 people would be residents who stayed in their homes and refused the evacuation order.

Other than the 31 persons saved by CAF helicopters and crews on June 20th and 21st, none of the DND or RCMP documents released so far have indicated more people being rescued as a result of the door-to-door searches conducted in High River.

According to other RCMP documents released so far:

- Between June 20th and June 24<sup>th</sup>, there were 674 forced entries and 386 guns seized.
- Between June 25th and July 10<sup>th</sup>, there were at least 1,200 more forced entries and 223 more guns seized.

- Canadian Armed Forces assisted the RCMP to move from home to home in High River up until June 27<sup>th</sup> when the province approved their return to home base.

It therefore seems obvious that CAF personnel, either knowingly or unwittingly, got caught up in a decision made by some authority to shift the priority of the operation in High River from one of search and rescue of people to a systemic and warrantless search and seizure of firearms, ammunition and other weapons with unrestricted forced entry into High River homes. We already know of at least one incident where two members of the Canadian Armed Forces, while under RCMP supervision, were seen kicking in a door to a High River home (after being told it was empty) and leaving with two long-guns in their hands.

Our military has a long and proud history. This episode cannot be left to fester and poison that image. Only a complete airing of the truth will reassure the people in communities all across Canada that when a state of emergency is called they are safe to leave their homes in the care of those who claim to be rescuers. Two nights ago on Global National News a woman from High River was being interviewed about her fears of a another flood this spring (2014). She responded that she would not leave her home because of what I described earlier in this letter. That is a real and present danger to public safety if the cover-up of the events in High River is allowed to continue. How many people will refuse to leave their homes when a future evacuations are ordered because they don't trust the RCMP? How many of those people will be injured or die as a result of this mistrust?

Mr. Ian McPhail, Q.C., Interim Chair of the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP is currently conducting an investigation of the whole High River mess. He could use your help to uncover the truth. Please provide his investigative team with access to everything your 330 soldiers and staff saw, heard and recorded during your Force's entire involvement in the High River search and seizure operation and an understanding of when, how and who gave the orders. With your support we may be able to clear the air and avoid a judicial inquiry.

Thanks for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

[Original signed by]

Dennis R. Young  
 1330 Ravenswood Drive SE  
 AIRDRIE AB T4A 0P8  
 Home Phone: 587-360-1111  
 New E-Mail: [dennisyoung@telus.net](mailto:dennisyoung@telus.net)

cc Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada  
 Honourable Steven Blaney, Minister of Public Safety  
 Honourable Peter Mackay, Minister of Justice  
 Ian McPhail, Interim Chair, Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP